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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/688,455	10/17/2003	Michinobu Oka	132578-00018	3028
3705	7590	01/31/2005	EXAMINER	
ECKERT SEAMANS CHERIN & MELLOTT			WEINSTEIN, STEVEN L	
600 GRANT STREET			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
44TH FLOOR			1761	
PITTSBURGH, PA 15219			DATE MAILED: 01/31/2005	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/688,455	OKA, MICHINOBU
Examiner	Art Unit	
Steven L. Weinstein	1761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 November 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 3 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 3 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueki (JP 60-126,044) in view of applicant's admission of the prior art further in view of Momiyama (5,759,608) and Hsu (4,675,199), for reasons given in the Office action mailed 7/14/04, further in view of Page (3,225,717), Eisendrath et al (3,744,404), Carroll (2,304,759), Pavan (6,168,817) and Fox (2,263,490).

Claim 3 now recites that the slits are made by a round blade which has a circular-arc portion and a notch, ~~makes the slits~~. The particular apparatus used to perform the slitting step in a method claim is not seen to impact the basic step of slitting. In any case, as evidenced by Page, Eisendrath et al, Carroll and Pavan, the art is replete with examples of forming slits in products, including dough based products, by employing a round blade which has a circular arc portion and a notch. The notch is to allow forming slits in aligned, spaced orientation from each other, which is both Ueki and applicant's objective. To modify the combination and employ a notoriously conventional apparatus to form the slits, i.e. for its art recognized and applicant's intended function is seen to have been unequivocally obvious.

Claims 3 also now recites that the cutting step is preformed by a cutter "apart" from (presumably separate from?) the slitter. Ueki appears to be silent in this regard. In any case, as evidenced by Page, it was conventional to cut dough after it is slitted.

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For example, in fig 9, the slitting occurs by blades 16 and then cutting occurs by blades 20. Also, note that Momiyama, although not slitting, does teach product impressing, followed by product cutting (e.g. Fig 3), and Fox also discloses that slitting and severing can occur in different steps. To modify the combination and employ conventional separate steps would therefore have been obvious.

All of applicant's remarks filed 11/8/04 have been fully and carefully considered but are considered to be moot in view of the new ground of rejection necessitated by the amendment filed 11/8/04.

The remainder of the references cited on the USPTO 892 form are cited as art of interest.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Steven L Weinstein whose telephone number is (571) 272-1410. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:00am to 3:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Milton Cano can be reached on (571) 272-1398. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

S. Weinstein/af
January 28, 2005

Steven Weinstein
STEVE WEINSTEIN
PRIMARY EXAMINER 1761
1/31/05